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Investigating Future Pathways for the Cameroonian Cocoa Sector that Lead to a Higher Cocoa Quality and Sustainability, Improving the Livelihood of Farming Households

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The cocoa value chain is of great significance for Africa, especially for West African countries. 70 % of the total cocoa world production comes from this region and many rural livelihoods depend on this cash crop. However, a number of diverse factors limit the production of cocoa cultivation and livelihood improvement in West Africa. Therefore, regarding the persistent poor livelihoods of cocoa farming households, future climate predictions and the pressure of the worldwide demand for higher cocoa productivity and quality there is still a strong need to find new approaches that guarantee a sustainable cocoa future and food security in Cameroon. This exploratory research investigates potential future pathways for the Cameroonian cocoa sector that were developed in the “Potential analysis of innovative approaches for the cocoa value chain in Cameroon” (PotinnocC) project of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Cameroon. By doing so, a holistic approach is applied, using theories of scenario analysis and agricultural innovation systems (AIS), to analyse these future possible scenarios within the current cocoa innovation system in Cameroon. Qualitative expert interviews, as well as a focus group discussion capture various perceptions of different actors of the cocoa value chain towards future pathways. Criteria, that is based on sources of the UN (United Nations), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) and ACI (African Cocoa Initiative) is tested to evaluate sustainability dimensions of the pathways. The study shows that certification and a stronger cooperation between the private and public sector are strongly envisioned by value chain actors. The generated results of the study contribute to IITA’s research project PotinnocC and its predicted outcome, which is to enable policy makers and other development agencies to understand the potentials and the hindrances in the cocoa value chain in Cameroon in order to help designing their interventions and strategies in an effective and efficient way.

Keywords: Cameroon, cocoa certification, cocoa value chain, future pathways, sustainable value chains

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